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Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council raises UNAMIR strength to 5,500 troops and expands mandate to provide security for civilians and humanitarian operations in Rwanda; demands end to mindless violence and imposes arms embargo against country.

+ As Committee on Information concludes general debate, speakers urge DPI to adopt balanced approach in publicizing peace-keeping and development activities.

+ Chairman of Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights warns economic restructuring may undermine those rights.

+ Brazil tells Commission on Sustainable Development that UNCED's accomplishments were modest; says some States have not lived up to commitments under programme of action.

+ Tuzla airport shelled as UNPROFOR flight carrying Jordanian personnel and mortar-locating equipment lands; no casualties reported.

+ Special Envoy Vance concludes parallel talks with delegations from former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece; Foreign Ministers of both countries to return to New York for further talks in June.

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The Security Council has increased the strength of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) to 5,500 troops and expanded its mandate to provide security for civilians and humanitarian operations. In adopting resolution 918 (1994) this morning, the Council demanded an end to the mindless violence in Rwanda, and imposed an arms embargo on the country. The resolution was adopted unanimously as a whole, after the second of its three parts had been approved by 14 votes in favour to one against (Rwanda). That part required all States to prevent the sale or supply of arms and military equipment to Rwanda.

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The resolution expanded UNAMIR's mandate to include, within resource limits, the protection of displaced persons, civilians at risk and humanitarian relief operations, and the establishment of secure humanitarian areas in Rwanda. The Council asked the Secretary-General to immediately redeploy UNAMIR military observers now in Nairobi to Rwanda, and to bring the infantry battalion already there up to full strength. It asked him to report as soon as possible on UNAMIR's next phase, including the cooperation of the parties, progress towards a cease-fire, the availability of resources, and the proposed duration of the Mission's mandate. It also asked him to report on the investigation of human rights violations in Rwanda, and on the humanitarian situation there. The Council encouraged the Secretary-General to accelerate efforts, in conjunction with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), to obtain the necessary personnel for rapid deployment.

The Council demanded that the parties in Rwanda immediately stop fighting and agree to a cease-fire. It urged them to cooperate with UNAMIR, particularly in ensuring humanitarian deliveries, and called on them to treat Kigali airport as a neutral zone under the Mission's control. The Council also invited the Secretary-General to continue to work for a political settlement in Rwanda within the framework of the Arusha Peace Agreement.

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The Department of Public Information (DPI) should adopt a balanced approach to publicizing peace-keeping and development activities, speakers said today as the Committee on Information concluded its general debate. Tunisia said the DPI was placing too much emphasis on peace-keeping, and called for a special effort to promote the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

Ethiopia said United Nations peace-keeping and peacemaking efforts should be clearly explained to the public, including what the Organization could and could not do under the Charter. The Czech Republic said increasing the volume of information on peace-keeping operations would protect the United Nations in cases when it was not viewed as objective. Jordan and Bangladesh also stressed the importance of information on peace-keeping operations, saying that their success depended on the awareness and understanding in the countries where they were taking place.

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The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights yesterday held a one day discussion on the role of social safety nets during economic restructuring or transition to a free market economy. The discussion was part of the Committee's tenth session, which began in Geneva 2 May. Committee Chairman Phillip Alston said extensive economic adjustments could have serious repercussions on economic and social rights, and noted that the Committee was the only United Nations body dealing with such rights.

The representative of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) said intensified economic competition and "down-sizing" meant the loss of jobs and

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benefits. People were now obliged to change jobs and develop new skills more frequently. However, despite such negative effects, a highly competitive environment was essential for economic growth and job creation, he concluded. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) said the Committee should examine whether employment was merely a product of growth or a basic right. Social safety nets for the most vulnerable must be put in place to mitigate the effects of economic adjustment policies, the UNDP representative said.

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The global partnership embracing both environment and development is becoming the "peace policy of the future", Klaus Topfer, the current chairman of the Commission on Sustainable Development said yesterday. The Commission was beginning its second session at Headquarters, during which it will review implementation of the programme of action adopted at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Mr. Topfer said peace was threatened by ecologically subsidized development on one hand, and underdevelopment on the other, and called for worldwide cooperation to share limited natural resources.

Brazil, which hosted UNCED, said the Conference's accomplishments had been modest; some developed countries lacked the political will to provide funding or to transfer technology, and there had been visible efforts to elude the programme of action. Outgoing Chairman Razali Ismail said the hard-won compact between North and South should not be frittered away, and urged States to live up to their responsibilities under the programme.

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Some 7 or 8 shells were fired at Tuzla airport today just after an aircraft belonging to the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) had landed there, according to a spokesman for the Organization. He said the shells appeared to have been fired from Bosnian Serb positions.

The aircraft unloaded its passengers -- Jordanian UNPROFOR personnel -- and a cargo of mortar-locating radar equipment, and took off safely, the spokesman said. He noted that the aircraft was the first flight into Tuzla airport since mid-April. The shelling caused no casualties, but there was some light damage to airport facilities.

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Special Envoy Cyrus Vance today announced that he had held parallel, in-depth talks with delegations from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece in New York since 13 May. The delegations -- headed respectively by Foreign Minister Stevo Crvenkovski and Secretary-General Christos Zacharakis of the Greek Foreign Ministry -- exchanged views with Mr. Vance on various suggestions submitted to them with a view to resolving their differences.

Mr. Vance said both parties had agreed to return to New York on or about 13 June for further talks at the level of Foreign Minister.

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